

THE CONTINENTAL REFORMERS

behind them, and, conscious of their power, would in the last resort compel submission by threatening to resign *en masse*. Profuse in expressions of sympathy, its strategy was to let the cannon balls of Christian Socialism spend themselves on the yielding down of official procrastination, and its first reply was normally *qu'on y pense un peu*. To the clergy its inactivity was a new proof of complicity with Mammon, and they did not hesitate to declare their indignation from the pulpit. "In 1574 Beza preached a sermon in which he accused members of the Council of having intelligence with speculators who had made a corner in wheat. Through-out 1577 the ministers were reproaching the Council with laxity in administration, and they finally denounced it as the real author of the rise in the prices of bread and wine. In 1579 they addressed to it a memorandum, setting out a new scheme of moral discipline and social reform*

The prosperous *bourgeoisie* who governed Geneva had no objection to discouraging extravagance in dress, or to exhorting the public to attend sermons and to send their children to catechism. But they heard denunciations of covetousness without enthusiasm, and on two matters they were obdurate. They refused to check, as the ministers concerned to lower prices had demanded, the export of wine, on the ground that it was

needed in
order to purchase imports of wheat;
and, as was
natural in a body of well-to-do creditors,
they would
make no concession to the complaint that
debtors were
subjected to a "double usury/" since they
were com-
pelled s. to repay loans in an
appreciating currency.
Money fell as well as rose, they replied, and"
even the
late M. Calvin, by whom the ordinance now
criticized
had been approved, had never pushed his
scruples to
such lengths. Naturally, the ministers were
indignant
at these evasions. They informed the
Council that
large sums were being spent by speculators
in holding
up supplies of corn* and launched a campaign
of sermons